

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL ARMED FORCES WORKING GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of the Armed Forces Working Group held on Tuesday, 8 October 2019 at 10.00 am at the Committee Room 1, The Council Offices, Clydach Vale.

County Borough Councillors - Armed Forces Working Group Members in attendance:-

Councillor M Webber (Chair)

Councillor S Bradwick Councillor G Caple
Councillor M Tegg

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Ms M Warburton, HR Advisor, Equality & Diversity Team
Mr J Ireland, Veteran Advice Officer
Mr J Maddison, Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer
Mr I Christopher, Strategic Manager

5 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed all Members and officers to the inaugural meeting of the working group.

6 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declaration of interest pertaining to the agenda.

7 MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve as an accurate record, the minutes of the meeting of the Armed Forces Working Group held on 12th June 2019.

8 ARMED FORCES EVENTS

The Strategic Manager provided Members with an update on the future Armed Forces Events for 2019-20.

Members were provided with details of events that were remaining in 2019, namely the Festival of Remembrance and Pontypridd Remembrance Sunday Service and Parade.

Members thanked the Officers for their continuing support and hard work with the organisation of Events over the past year, it has been greatly appreciated.

Following discussions Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

9 ARMED FORCES COVENANT

The Equality and Diversity Adviser, Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer and the Veteran Advice Officer, together with colleagues provided Members with an overview on the work undertaken to fulfil the Council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant.

The Equality and Diversity Adviser updated Members with regard to funding for the Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer which is currently funded by the Armed Forces Covenant grant fund, Welsh Government have confirmed they will fund this post for a further 2 years.

Members were provided with an update in relation to supporting the Armed Forces Covenant, since the previous meeting of the Armed Forces Working Group.

Members were informed that the Armed Forces Officer Network met on 18th September 2019, to discuss activity, in relation to the Armed Forces across the Council and were provided with a presentation by the Veteran Advice Officer.

Members were advised that they would be provided with an update following the next meeting in December 2019.

It was noted that two Reserve Day events took place in July, and were both successful and positive feedback had been received.

Members were informed that Officers have continued to engage with veteran groups across the Authority to develop future initiatives.

Members were advised that the Park and Dare Theatre would be hosting a special showing of Zulu, specifically for Armed Forces families, and were welcomed along in support of the event. Also, the charity 'Tickets for Troops' were now available to order on the website.

The Equality and Diversity Adviser circulated the draft Armed Forces Covenant Newsletter, which had been produced to highlight Council's commitment to the Armed forces and to raise awareness of commemoration events initiatives, and asked Members to feedback any comments to her.

The Armed Forces Covenant Liaison Officer informed the Group that he attended the Armed Forces Covenant Conference provided by Welsh Government on 3rd October 2019 and facilitated a presentation on the partnership's progress to date. Further information would be provided at the next meeting.

Members were advised of the two nominations for the Armed Forces in

Wales Awards, which is organised by the Ministry of Defence recognises those who have made outstanding contributions to the Armed Forces Community.

The Equality and Diversity Adviser commented that there is still a need to appoint a War Memorial Officer, sometime in the near future.

Members commented on the commemorative plaques across the County Borough and felt that they are relatively difficult to differentiate from other plaques that are not retained by the Authority, which had caused some confusion amongst local residents.

It was noted that the Council has a strong commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and this is evidenced by cross-cutting work by a number of service areas to support its pledge.

Following discussions Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

10 VETERAN ADVICE SERVICE

The Veteran Advice Officer presented his report, which detailed the Veterans Advice Service Cwm Taf position Statement from January 2019 – 30th September 2019.

Members were informed that the Veteran Advise Officer has been in post since January 2019, and the post is a 2-year Armed Forces Covenant Funded position.

Within the report, Members were provided with updates in relation to:

- Armed Forces Community.
- VOA Service Awareness/Promotion
- VOA Referrals and Case Studies

Members thanked the officers for the exceptional work they have undertaken and succeeding in providing an excellent service to veterans living within the County Borough.

Following discussions Members **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report.

This meeting closed at 11.15 am

**CIlr M Webber
Chair.**